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WMU Junior Spotlight

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• Good morning. I'm happy to see you here today and so pleased that you are considering Western Michigan University for your college education. You've already made a good decision by putting WMU on your shortlist. I know what you experience today will keep you interested.

• When you make that decisions, I hope you think carefully about this University. There are two critical pieces of information I want you to take home with you today.

-First, this is a place where you will have choices--great choices. We have 148 undergraduate majors--the second highest of any Michigan university. And those programs are among the best anywhere. If there were a tournament and a "Final Four" for degree programs in aviation, engineering management, vocal jazz, accountancy, speech pathology, supply chain management, psychology, marketing, science education or dozens of other programs, we'd be in that final four every year.

-Second, this is a university that is set up to make you successful. You'll develop close relationships with faculty members who are at the top of their game. What you learn in the classroom will be taught by people who really know their stuff--in fact, they probably did "write the book" on whatever topic they're teaching. And when you graduate, what you've learned here will translate into success. In fact, we've been carefully tracking our graduate's success. For our most recent graduating class, 88 percent are
actively engaged--in a job or grad school--within three months of graduation. For those working, the median salary was $45,000 to $50,000.

• As president of WMU, I'm in a unique position. I get to meet and interact with students at every point in the higher education process. On the front end, I get to meet students and families who are just beginning the college search process--students and families like you. There aren't many things I like more than introducing prospective students to this University.

• At the other end of the continuum, I get to see alumni who found success on our campus and have turned their education and experiences here into successful careers. I have the opportunity to meet and get to know our alumni all over the world. They are living successful lives and earning recognition in their chosen fields. For instance…

-This week while I'm watching ESPN or CNN, I will take immense pleasure in listening to 1996 alum LZ Granderson offering up his sports and political commentary.

-And I take enormous satisfaction that our alumni are playing critically important roles worldwide. Accountancy alumnus Dennis McNally, for instance is chairman of PriceWaterhouseCoopers International. Alumnus Jack Clifford founded the Food Network, and alumna Marin Mazzie is a Broadway star and three-time Tony nominee, who will star this spring in "The King and I."
• Wednesday night, I presided over a convocation of 50 Presidential Scholars—graduating seniors who have earned the highest award we give to an undergraduate. Five or six years ago, those Presidential Scholars were doing just what you're doing today—checking us out. Now they're getting ready to graduate after an academic adventure filled fun, lasting friendships and incredible accomplishments in their chosen fields.

-A young bioscientist who with another student has invented a low-cost infant respirator that will save premature infants in developing nations. He is off to London for a year-long special program in public health before he returns to begin his medical school studies.

-Our Presidential Scholar in mechanical and aerospace engineering has been working with NASA during his career here and will participate in a 10-week summer internship with the Air Force Research Laboratory in California. Ultimately he expects to earn a doctoral degree with a focus on electric propulsion and plasma dynamics.

- Another scholar who is majoring in food and consumer goods marketing will join the S.C. Johnson Company after her April graduation. She'll be a senior associate analyst on the company's Category and Trade Solutions team for one of the company's major accounts--Wal-Mart.

And, those were only three of the 50 Presidential Scholars. Not that long ago, they all sat right here where you're sitting. Today, they're prepared to graduate and determine their next giant step forward into their futures. We are very excited (and proud) to see what they will do next.
• You can succeed here, and I look forward to seeing your walk across the Miller Auditorium stage sometime in the future to receive your diploma--but not before we've had a chance to get to know you and find out just what you can accomplish as a WMU Bronco.

• Enjoy your day here. Be sure to ask lots of questions. We'll make sure you get the answers that will help you succeed. Get ready to Grab the Reins and Go West.